

OUR TEMPLE:

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE DEDICATION

OF THE

“Central” Evangelical Lutheran Church,

STAUNTON, VA.

NOVEMBER 30, 1856.

BY THE

REV. J. A. SEISS, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE LOMBARD STREET LUTHERAN CHURCH, BALTIMORE.

—:O:—

MOUNTAIN VALLEY, VA.,

[NEAR HARRISONBURG:]

PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF JOSEPH FUNK AND SONS.
1857.

CORRESPONDENCE.

STAUNTON, DEC. 4, 1856.

TO THE REV. J. A. SEISS,

DEAR SIR:—The undersigned having had the pleasure of hearing your able and eloquent sermon, delivered in Central Ev. Lutheran Church, at Staunton, on the occasion of its dedication, most respectfully ask that you submit it to the proper functionaries of that Church for publication.

Pleased as we were in hearing, we believe that its perusal will afford great gratification to the public generally, and confer a lasting benefit upon the cause of religion and morality.

Trusting that you will comply with the above request,

We remain, with much respect, yours, &c.

D. S. BEAR	GEO. K. GILMER
GEO. BAYLOR	J. C. M. MERRILLAT
A. H. H. STUART	JAS. A. PIPER.
J. W. STRIBLING	S. P. FINK
A. T. KINNEY	JNO. F. J. WHITE
P. H. TROUT	D. BUCHER
W. J. HUNTER	ABR'M. LANG
WM. S. H. BAYLOR	H. FAUST
HIRAM S. OPIE	J. STEINBROOK
F. B. FUQUA	D. W. DRAKE
J. W. MEREDITH	S. J. ALFRED
JAS. G. LAIRD	THOS. J. MICHIE
THOS. A. BLEDSOE	JNO. TRENARY
GEO. E. PRICE	E. LAWTON
S. H. LUSHBAUGH	JNO. B. DAVIS
WM. G. STERRETT	B. B. DONAGHEE
J. H. O'BRIEN	J. M. BAYLOR
C. D. STRICKLER	H. S. EICHELBERGER
M. P. FUNKHOUSER	JNO. B. HOGE.

—:O:—

BALTIMORE, DEC. 6, 1856.

TO D. S. BEAR, COL. G. BAYLOR, HON. A. H. H. STUART, J. W. STRIBLING, and others:

DEAR SIR:—Your note, requesting for publication the sermon which I pronounced in Staunton, on last Sunday morning, is before me. Though pleased to be thus assured of the favor with which said discourse was received by the intelligent audience to whom I was privileged to preach it, I have felt some reluctance in complying with your wishes. Nevertheless, yielding to the weight of considerations superior to personal inclinations, I submit the manuscript to your disposal.

With great respect

Your servant in the Gospel.

J. A. SEISS.

THE SERMON.

—:o:—

“And have built the house for the name of the LORD GOD of Israel.”—2 CHRONICLES 6 : 10.

MEMORABLE was the occasion when first these words were uttered. A duty had just been performed. A labor of seven years had just been brought to its consummation. A great work of piety, patriotism and gratitude to the Giver of all good, had just been completed. Mount Moriah had just received its last and noblest decoration. A structure towered on its summit, whose massive masonry and golden grandeur astonished every eye, and gladdened every heart. The hosts of Israel were solemnly gathered in and around it. The sound of trumpets and of cymbals was there, and the music of harps and voices echoed along its corridors and trembled through the firmament. King and commons, priests and warriors, and delegations from all the hills and vales of Palestine, were joined in one great act of adoring praise; for a house had been built for God, and a becoming dwelling-place for the Jehovah of Israel.

Not very dissimilar are the circumstances which now surround us. Here, too, a work of piety has been performed. An enterprise involving many anxieties and many prayers has reached its completion. The labor of years is finished. A noble edifice stands over us as the crown of many toils. Sympathizing friends, with glad hearts, have gathered in from every side, to mingle in the celebrations of the common joy. The songs of praise, and the voices of thanksgiving have gone up to Him who hath in mercy brought us to this day. We are here to join in the invocation, that the presence of the Holy One may dwell in this place. For we have cast up these

walls in honor of our Maker, "and have built the house for the name of the Lord God of Israel."

Oh, let the people praise Him, for He is good, and His mercy endureth for ever!

This, then, is no heathen temple. It is not a Pantheon of mythologic deities. It is not to be the home of pagan orgies, or atheistic blasphemies. "There be gods many, and lords many, but our God is *one Lord*." We believe there is a God; and that this God is the only God; and that this one God is "The Lord God of Israel." We cannot explore his unsearchable God-head. We cannot explain the secrets of his awful being. We cannot tell you all that He is, nor how He is. Such knowledge is too wonderful for us, and too high for finite faculties to reach. But, we are satisfied that He is. We feel that he must be; and therefore we believe it. The turning of the needle to the magnet, proves the existence of the magnet; and so the instinct which inclines universal man to the recognition of some worshipful superior Power, argues the existence of such a Power. Everywhere we see the evidences of his creativeness and providential presence, and we cannot doubt. We cannot think that man, with all his wondrous attributes of body, heart and mind, is a mere accident; or that the grand universe of worlds was hung together in its mysterious and harmonious clock-work by a mere fortuitous concourse of things. And though we should be driven to trace back the line of causation even to infinity, reason still insists upon the existence of some ultimate *First Cause*, embodying in itself the force of all causes, the intelligence of all intelligences, the power of all powers, the good of all goodness, eternal, incorporeal, invisible, filling all space, supporting all existence, infinite, absolute, and for ever unsearchable and unknown. We cannot tell how there can be existence without beginning, or duration without succession, or presence without circumference, or action without motion, or universality without parts; and yet we believe, and maintain, that there is, and of necessity must be, One, who pervades immensity and eternity, without beginning, without ending, without limitation, without variation, from everlasting to everlasting, supreme, alone, by himself, God. We contemplate his works. We behold his wisdom, his power, his goodness, so multiform, so transcendant, so unvarying, that we cannot but adore. We look abroad upon this massive earth, at the grandeur of its mountains, at the sublime vastness of its oceans, at the beauty of its islands, and at the glory of its continents;—we

study its high relations in the sisterhood of worlds; we consider its attendants; we watch its complex motions;—we glance at its thousand millions of human inhabitants—their varied interests—their wonderful endowments—and everything everywhere tending to some definite, unique, ultimate consummation:—we review the ninety thousand distinct orders of vegetable productions—their curious designs—their unending beauties—their multifarious adaptations;—we examine the countless kinds of animal orders—the fishes in the water—the birds in the air—the beasts in the forest—the insects with their millioned population everywhere;—and we wonder, we are amazed, we cannot resist adorative impressions of soul, at the intelligence that contrived, the goodness that arranged, and the power that sustains and directs all these things. We lift up our eyes from the earth; and the wonder increases as we look. A boundless expanse is above, around, and beneath us, peopled with myriads of other worlds, more massive in size, more exalted in character, and doubtless more numerous and glorious in their populations, all moving, all in harmony, all subservient to each other, and all woven together with skill unfathomable into one infinite, eternal, living *Poem* to the great Maker's praise. The wing of thought grows weary in the attempt to survey it. The very sublimity of our contemplations overpowers us. We are ready to fall down and worship even what we see. But above, before, beyond all this, there is a hidden *Unit*, comprehending in himself the forces that produced, and the wisdom, goodness and power which built, arranged, supports and governs all this vast, living, incomprehensible mechanism. We are overwhelmed at the mighty conception. We cannot refrain from adoration whenever we bring it before us. The very greatness of Jehovah compels our homage. And when we thus move out into the stupendous wildernesses of Godhead, we feel as if there could be no higher happiness, and no sublimer glory, than to cast one's self at his feet, and cry his name—God! God! God! for ever and forever. We have therefore built the house for his name.

But, neither is this a Mahometan mosque, a Jewish conventicle, or a deistical gathering place. We have not built it for the Koran, or for the traditions of the Elders, or for the uncertain and ever-changing philosophies of man. We are to consecrate it to God, as the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It is to be sacredly devoted to God's own revelation—to the gospel of our Lord and Sav-

ior Jesus Christ, than which there is no better cause, and for which the world contains no adequate substitute.

Christianity is the only religion worthy of the name. This alone can solve man's doubts, and satisfy his conscience, and renew his nature, and meet the aspirations that well up within him. You may tell him, there is no hereafter, and write upon the gateways to the tomb that death is an eternal sleep; but that will not blunt the poignancy of earthly sorrow, nor give him hope in his dying hour, nor quiet his disturbing forebodings of dread. You may tell him that the Bible is a forgery—that all its sublime revealments are the mere vagaries of crazy or designing men—and that all its solemn inculcations of responsibility are but the bugbears of traditional superstition; and his carnal heart may hear you with pleasure for a while; but his soul cannot feel secure upon mere negations, and when the time of trial comes, like Hume's mother, he still implores you for something to fill the vacancy you have created, and conjures you for consolations which you cannot give. You take away the only book that tells him of peace and heaven, and give him cloudy nothing in its place. You have not met his wants. You may tell him that he is a mere accidental compound of eternal ever-changing matter, born of chance, living by a brief fortuitous concourse of things, soon to vanish again in the excentric current of eternal forces; but you so contradict his native reason, and confound his understanding, and disappoint his aspirations, and fetter him with impossibilities, that, with all his corrupt wishes in your favor, his heart rebels against your philosophy, and he confesses, with Gibbon, as he contemplates his end, that "*all is dark and doubtful.*" You may tell him of the beneficence and clemency of God in nature—you may reason to him of the impossibility that Jehovah should create anything to live in wretchedness—and you may assure him, as the serpent assured Eve, that there is no such thing as sin, or future judgment; but you cannot silence his consciousness that he is wretched already, nor burn out of him his inborn convictions of responsibility, nor school him into the belief that a few cents worth of arsenic is sufficient to land any godless villain in the bright home of God and angels. You may talk to him of that shadowy thing which men call the religion of nature, you may lead him into the temples of science, and conduct him through all the long-drawn isles of mere earthly wisdom; but it will not answer. You may make him a Geologist, and let him throw himself back into

the abyss of the past to contemplate creation's dawn and the elemental convulsions which marked the birth-hour of the world—to listen to the dark thunders of organizing chaos—to trace the mighty eruptions which laid the foundations of earth's isles and continents—and to survey the whole cemetery of extinct races, so as to know when they lived and how they died. But, after he has examined and classified every fossil and formation, and settled his mind upon all the truths which that science teaches, and fully mastered all its lessons, he has found nothing to give him patience in affliction, or peace in death, or any certain hope for immortality. His acquisitions may have given him many joyous surprises, and furnished food for many pleasing and wondrous contemplations; but he has found nothing to give rest to his aching soul. You may make him a historian, and let him trace the rise, and glory, and decline of races, nations, kingdoms, thrones, sects, castes and dignities. He may follow up the changes, revolutions, coalitions, disruptions, wars and extirpations which mark the annals of time. He may philosophise on their causes and results, and learn all the lessons taught by ages of facts. He may learn there that man has been depraved and wretched from the beginning—that all earthly aggrandizement is but vanity—and that even the paths of glory lead only to the grave. But, apart from the gospel, he finds nothing to give him hope towards God—nothing to ease his troubled conscience—nothing to assure him of peace when earthly good shall fail him—nothing to tell him wherewithal his God is pleased, or how his redemption is to be achieved. He may master medical science, and become a great physician;—he may know the name and use of every bone, and joint, and muscle, and nerve, and tissue, and organ in man's body;—he may understand the causes, and symptoms, and remedies of every disease;—he may be acquainted with the properties and medical effects of all the plants, and insects, and minerals, and gasses, and compounds in the earth;—he may add to this a familiar knowledge of the mind, and its relations to the body, and its wondrous mechanism and mysterious operations;—but, after all, what progress has he made to prepare his soul for coming judgment, or to equip himself for a peaceful death and a happy immortality? Can his medicines cure his sinsick spirit? Can his physics or his metaphysics quell the outcries of his burdened conscience? He may understand law, and master the principles, applications, and details of the most comprehensive

jurisprudence;—he may know how to compute crime, and apportion penalties, and dictate justice, and describe the ways to secure its administration. But what can he find in all his legal wisdom to tell him how a mortal offender shall be just with God, or how he shall escape the righteous judgment of his Maker? It may convict him of sin, but does not show him the way, or bring him the hope of salvation! He may be skilled in astronomy, the sublimest of all the sciences;—he may weigh the planets, and count the stars, and measure their distances, and ascertain their motions and relations;—he may sweep through the immensity of worlds scattered like shining dust over all the plains of space;—he may describe all the suns and systems “that wheel unshaken through the void immense;”—but having grasped the whole amplitude and mechanism of the great universe of revolving orbs, let him put the question, and reiterate it through the whole extent of his magnificent contemplations, *Where shall I find salvation for my poor soul?* And there is silence, but no response! Nay, let him unite upon himself all that a man, in this life, by any possibility, might attain apart from Christ and the gospel;—let him possess all the culture, and wealth, and distinction, which any worldling ever enjoyed;—let him understand all sciences from their Alpha to Omega;—let him have all the magnificence of Nebuchadnezzar, the power of Alexander, and the fame, friends, riches and wisdom of Solomon;—let him be surrounded by all the products of ancient and modern art;—let him carry the keys that open at will all the contents of earth’s libraries, and palaces, and storages of wealth, wisdom, beauty, and delight;—let him “*gain the whole world;*”—yet, what is he without the gospel?—a frail, dying sinner, who cannot think of God without dismay, nor spend a sober reflective hour without disturbing apprehensions, nor survey even his grand estate without the painful agonizing certainty flashing into his face that a few days will tear him from it, and leave him to rot with the beggar in the place of bones! And as he looks forward to the destiny of his soul, what has he among all his possessions that can give him peace! With all his gains and honors, he is wretched in spirit. Nebuchadnezzar’s dreams still make him afraid, and the visions of his head still trouble him. Alexander still weeps with the world crouching at his feet. And Solomon amid all his glory still cries for very bitterness—“*Vanity of vanities; all is vanity and vexation of spirit!*”

No, no, no; there is nothing that can take the place of the gospel of

Jesus, or furnish a pillow of repose for man's ailing spirit. We ask geology, but it has nothing to give. We scan the records of the past, but they cannot supply us. We go to the physician, the philosopher, and the jurist, asking for a remedy for these spiritual aches and moral disorders; but they give us none. We ask of the rolling worlds above us, but even the spheres have no music to charm our anxious souls to rest. We go out under all auspices, and in every direction, asking where we shall find "the one thing needful;" we repeat our inquiries amid all the walks, and works, and wonders of God's creation and man's invention; but from all our search, we must needs come back disheartened, disappointed, and sicker than when we started.

We come now to christianity and the gospel. We open this blessed book. We search its remarkable records. We present our inquiries to the prophets, apostles and evangelists. And their words come over the soul like rain upon the mown grass. We find them uttering a sense of sin and moral ailment, just the thing which troubles us. We hear them lamenting over guilt and despairing of justification by the deeds of the law. Sadly do they speak of inward corruptions, and spiritual weaknesses, and disordered hearts. Tremblingly do they point to God's adorable holiness, and to the fearful judgment. But still we find them hopeful and joyous. The prophets point to expected and promised achievements of a Messiah to come, as furnishing all needful consolation. The apostles and evangelists bear witness of Jesus of Nazareth, and his deeds of love, as He of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. We ask who and what is this mysterious personage? And all the writers of the Old Testament and the New, with one accord, respond,—He is the model Man, in whom humanity reached its perfection—He is the great plenipotent of heaven, come down with power from God to negotiate with rebel and fallen men for peace and salvation—He is at once the priest and sacrifice, offering and effecting expiation for all the guilt of those who will come to terms with him—He is the great Captain of redemption, able to save unto the uttermost, and ready to conduct all who enlist under his banner through trouble, death, and all the judgment-fires safe and unharmed to glory everlasting. They tell us that his body was broken, and his blood shed, for us, and for many, for the remission of sins—that he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification—that he is now en-

throned in heaven, and ever lives to intercede for us—that his spirit is present where even two or three are gathered together in his name, to hear their prayers, to comfort them in their distresses, to strengthen them against their foes, and to guide them into all truth—and that he will soon come again to receive us to himself to be with him and like him for ever. We muse upon these wonderful statements, and our very hearts burn within us. Can they be true? Human genius could not have invented them. So many men, in so many different ages, testifying under so many different circumstances, and so true and upright in every thing else, could not have given such testimony if it were false. Here, then, is what the needy and anxious soul requires. From our fruitless survey of creation, we come to the humble, despised and crucified Galilean; and in him we have eternal life. We need nothing else. In him we find what nought beside contains, and what is sufficient though everything else be wanting. Though poor, in him we have riches. Though persecuted, in him we have sympathy, consolation and inward peace. Though tempted, in him we have refuge and succor. Though sick, in him we have alleviation for our pains in the hope of a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. Though bereaved, in him we have wherewith to gild the gloom of the desolate home, and to throw a mantle of light upon the graves of our friends. Though we die—die neglected and despised—die like Lazarus among the dogs—die like the Master amid the shame and anguish of crucifixion,—still, in him, our very death is gain, our fall is victory, our disgrace is glory! Oh, how sublime and complete are the provisions of God in Christ Jesus! How gracious is the gospel! How precious its promises! How transporting its hopes! How it meets the vast desires of humanity, and pours consolation into the hearts of the children of sorrow! In all the universe, what is there to compare with it!

We, therefore, give it a high and hearty preference to all other systems. We honor it, and cleave to it, and glory in it, as man's sublimest possession. And to it we consecrate this house, built for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

But, neither is this a sanctuary for every *ism* which may choose to baptize itself with the christian name. It is not a Romish chapel or a Greek cathedral. It is a *Protestant Temple*. It is what is popularly known as a *Lutheran Church*.

Who Luther was, I need hardly say. Cumming has told you,

that his name is “ploughed into the hearts of millions, and highest in the list of the illustrious dead;”—that “kings and emperors have made pilgrimages to his tomb;”—that “Charles V., Frederick the Great, Peter of Russia, and Wallenstine, and lastly Napoleon, visited the spot where his remains lie”—and that “even these names, the sounds of which still shake the casement of the world, seem but cyphers beside his dust.” Chalmers has told you, that, “by the might of his uplifted arm, he shook the authority of the high pontificate which kept the potentates of the earth in thralldom, and brought down the peering altitude of that olden Tyranny.” Carlyle has told you, that he was “*a true great man—an Alpine mountain—unsubdued granite, piercing far and wide into the heavens.*” Montgomery has told you, that he was “the Elijah of the Reformation, whose life constitutes the embodied poem of European Protestantism; whose *yes or no* the wheel of ages turned; and who champions the world to show his equal yet.” A ransomed church, brought up from the dark grave of the middle ages, and stretching its wings of glory to the four corners of the earth, is the imperishable monument of his enduring fame.

But it is not on Luther that our Church is built. We honor him as a chosen instrument of God to give to the world a free gospel, and to restore the christianity which Christ and his apostles taught; but we believe nothing simply because he taught it. We rest upon no man, however wise and great; but upon God and his inspired word. As the pious Prince George once said, “We are not baptized in the name of Luther. He is not our Lord and Savior. We do not rest our faith in him, and are not saved by him. In such a sense, we are no *Lutherans*. But, if it be asked, whether with heart and lips we profess the doctrines which God restored to light through the instrumentality of his blessed servant, Dr. Luther, we neither hesitate nor are we ashamed to call ourselves *Lutherans*. In this sense *we are* and while we live *will remain Lutherans.*” Our Church claims to be *Evangelical*. This is her proper designation. It has only been by the sneers of enemies that we ever came to be known as *Lutherans*. We take the Scriptures, and them only, as our infallible standard of faith and practice.

An open Bible man's guide to heaven;—

Private judgment man's inalienable birth-right;—

Christ and him crucified man's only Savior;—

True faith in him man's only availing righteousness ;—
These are the pillars of our creed—the corner-stones of our Church. With these, Rome was bumbled. With these Protestantism was built. And with these we hope to live and prosper to the end when Christ himself shall come.

It is to be regretted, that, in this western world, so little is understood of the Lutheran Church, which is at once the parent root and the master-wheel of Protestant Christianity. Even our own people are not generally informed on this subject as they ought to be. It is, perhaps, more their misfortune than their fault. Until within the last fifty years, and in some places to the present moment, our Church has been heard only in a language foreign to this country. Our rich and unrivalled literature has remained locked up in inaccessible libraries, or in the German and Latin tongues, unknown to Americans, except to a few of the learned, and by them mostly used without due acknowledgment. The entire English language, until within the last few years, has contained scarcely anything to enable a man to form an idea of the immensely important history and literature of Germany and its Church. Though the English mind has been more under the influence of German thought than many are prepared to admit, it is a fact that English authorship has furnished to modern readers an exceedingly imperfect and distorted idea of Lutheran history and theology. Some of the most distinguished English critics and reviewers have noticed and declared this fact as very remarkable.

It is also true, that some English writers have greatly misrepresented us. Often, without ability so much as to read the language of our great Divines, and without using due care to verify their statements, they have shamefully abused the public mind, and expressed themselves about our doctrines, polity and position in ways which reflect most unhappily upon their learning, their charity and their gratitude. Did necessity require, I could easily verify what I here declare.

The change of language, too, which our church has been undergoing in this country, has brought with it many disadvantages and embarrassments. In laying aside that tongue in which her great victories were won, the Lutheran Church has lost much. Our many books have thus become almost useless to her. The translations of some of her theological terms, have subjected her to unfortu-

nate misunderstandings and unfounded prejudices. The English churches have evinced an inveterate obtuseness in apprehending what she is and teaches, though feasting on her fat things, and flourishing in her plumage. Men of sectarian feelings have taken advantage of her foreign accent to brand her with derision, and by the undue weight attached to their names, have brought her into undeserved contempt.

But, we have indications of a better state of things. The eye of the world is turning towards Germany. Protestantism is reviewing the ground on which it started. The land of the illustrious leaders of the Reformation is everywhere beginning to be referred to, as the matchless recourse “for narratives of dramatic interest—for the delineation of characters contrasted in everything except their common design—for exploring the influence of philosophy, arts and manners on the fortunes of mankind—and for reverently tracing the footsteps of Divine Providence moving among the works and ways of men.” Poetry and eloquence are gathering higher inspirations from its battle-scenes for God, and Christ, and Liberty. Literary men and women are studying the German language, and thereby making themselves familiar with

“The Kings of mind who govern from their graves.”

The warm heart of modern freedom throbs afresh as it contemplates Luther and his compeers,

“Rising in the majesty of moral force
To heave the world from superstition’s grave,
And bid it look upon the Cross and live.”

Men of the Lutheran Church are appearing among the high ranks of English authorship. The works of our great theologians are being translated, read and appreciated. Wealth, education, culture are rapidly increasing among us. Colleges, Seminaries, Academies and Church-schools are multiplying throughout the length and breadth of our American Zion. And everything promises fair to bring forth the first-born of the Reformation to the view of this Western world, in something of the dignity and glory which distinguish her in the land of her nativity.

Some men sneer at the Lutheran Church as a small and insignificant *sect*. But she is no *sect* at all, in any proper sense of that word. She is not a separating party—a seceding faction—a new commun-

ion. She is a part of the broad stream of the Church's historic life from the Apostles until now. *She embraces among her members more people than all other evangelical denominations put together.* She is not a *branch* of the church, as men speak; she is the very *body and trunk* of it on which all the branches depend. Forty millions of souls are united in her communion. Strike her out of being, and Protestantism would be a dwarfed, diminutive and sickly thing; the spinal column of its strength would be gone.

It is not the habit of Lutheran Clergymen to boast of these sublime details, or to dwell upon them in public discourse. Yet, in these days of sectarian parade and fanatical pretensions and sneers, we may be justified in alluding to them on an occasion like this. And should the demand be made, we have the data to satisfy every candid inquirer, that the relation and achievements of our Church with respect to Christendom at large, are the most exalted and magnificent of which history can speak. She has defined and established the doctrines which distinguish the protestant world. Luther in his Theses and the Torgau Articles, and the Lutherans in the Augsburg Confession, were the first to lay open effectually the ancient and everlasting foundations of christianity after the papacy had buried them. Luther found the Bible chained, but he set it free; and with his associates put it into the hands of the people in a translation that has never been surpassed, and which has led the way for all subsequent translations. In her great Confessions, given out in those trying times when the hopes of the world trembled in the hearts of a few brave men, our Church has furnished to all protestant denominations the essence of their creed. "The Confession of Augsburg has been substantially inwrought into all the later Evangelical symbols, both in and out of Germany." The 39 articles and parts of the Prayer-book of the Episcopal Church, are almost entirely of Lutheran origin. Bishop Burnet and Bishop Lawrence, Hardwick, Archdeacon Hare and Bishop Meade, all Episcopalians, have acknowledged this. Dr. Short and Bishop Whittingham of the same Church have affirmed the same; the latter of whom, in his charge for 1849, declares of these 39 articles that "the Confession of Augsburg is their source, their prototype in form, their model in doctrine, and the very foundation of many of their expressions." D'Aubigne, the Calvinistic Historian, says, that "The German Reformation is the true and fundamental Reformation." And according to the Philosophic

Schlegel, who is no friend to our churches, "in Germany lies the root of Protestantism, its mighty centre, its all-ruling spirit, its vital power, and its life-blood." I give you his own words.

But I will not indulge myself in this train of remarks. Our Church will not consent to be regarded as a mere party in Christendom, striving to outstrip other parties. She does not present her claims on the ground of sectarian superiority. She has nothing to do with sect. She presents herself as the life-stream of Protestantism and Christianity. Her history and her membership, as well as her freedom from party peculiarities, entitle her to this pre-eminence. Her work is not to make men sectarian enthusiasts, or to win them to some specious and peculiar form of doctrine or worship; but to make them christians—*catholic* christians, and heirs of eternal life. She allows and provides for all those unavoidable diversities which exist among christian believers on minor matters. If a member conscientiously believes that the Scriptures teach Calvinism, she will not call him to account as a heretic; nor will she expel him from her altars if he should reject the Calvinistic peculiarities. She requires belief only in the essentials of christian doctrine, leaving individual judgment free upon all those questions which divide the protestant sects. The aim of all her arrangements is, to lay such a doctrinal, governmental, and liturgical foundation as to take in and include all who can by any means be regarded as christians. As Chapin, of the Episcopal Church, has said of her, "She breathes the free spirit of Luther, and the mild spirit of Melancthon." She battles not for forms and ceremonies neither does she battle against them except when they usurp the Spirit's place; but insists only upon the essential truth and sacraments which Jesus himself hath taught and appointed. She approaches men while yet in the nursery, marks them with the badge of discipleship in the holy ordinance of baptism, gathers them into classes to be instructed in the things of God and heaven, admits them to communion by the ancient apostolic rite of confirmation, and regards herself as ever charged with their spiritual good, from early infancy to the approach of death, when amid solemn supplications she commits them to the hands of that Redeemer in whom her confidence and hope are fixed.

If I love this church, then let my simple affection be pardoned. If I am impelled to say a modest word in her favor, let my forwardness be excused. If my zeal appears too ardent, remember how hard it is for a child to be weaned from a faithful mother. She has

been a mother to me, and to others around me. She called me when wandering away from God in danger and in sin. She took me and taught me when I was weak and erring. She invited me to a place among those who stand as watchmen on her walls. She has richly dealt to me of her precious things. She has made me an heir to her brilliant hopes. And when these eyes grow dim with sickness or with age—when these limbs tremble with feebleness beside the grave,—I expect her to stand by me with her consolations, as she has stood by millions better than I, to lay me down with solemn care in the silent house appointed for all living, and now and then to come and drop a tear or two upon the green sod that shall grow upon my tomb. I expect this of her; and some of you expect the same. Nor will she disappoint us. Why then should I be blamed for caressing her matronly hand, or be censured for confessing that I honor and love her?

Look at this noble church. Behold her in her glory. Half the world knows her history by heart. The majestic courage and unbending faith of her Luther, the learning, piety, and child-like simplicity of her Melancthon; the heavenly spirit and holy fervency of her Franke, her Spener and her Arndt; are among christianity's brightest gems, and some of the Savior's choicest jewelry. Who can behold her without admiration! What generous heart that does not swell with gratitude to God that ever he gave her being! What lover of Jesus or the gospel that does not feel the prayer rising to his lips, that He who hath blest her in time past may be her patron and protector still! She is a mother of saints and an ark of salvation. Favored of men and honored of God, we will abide with her. We will not cease our efforts to extend her field and increase her strength. And for her we have built the house—built for the name of the Lord God of Israel.

And now what wait we for?—"Arise, O Lord, into thy rest; thou, and the ark of thy strength. Let thy priests be clothed with righteousness; and let thy saints shout aloud for joy!"

"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy!"